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Naturally Yours
Learn about the wonderful world of wildlife adaptation on page 2.

Blue Box evolution
Gain insight into the history of recycling with Blue Boxes on page 8.

Building futures
Read about recent SIRCH carpentry program graduates on page 11.

Ruby and Pearl Mansfield laugh during public skating at the AJ LaRue Arena on Thursday, Jan. 5 in Haliburton during their winter break from school. /VIVIAN COLLINGS Staff

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Naturally Yours

The wonderful world of wildlife adaptation

RICK WHITTEKER
Special to *County Life*

Reading David Attenborough's *Life on Earth*, I was struck by how drought influenced the evolution of the Galapagos Tortoise. With lower laying vegetation withering in the heat, survival favoured those tortoises with longer necks that could reach leaves growing higher up in the bush. Hence, shorter necked tortoises died, and the DNA of longer necked tortoises was passed on; a simplified example of how animals become specialized in some way to meet the demands of their environment. The local wildlife also has unique adaptations which have helped them survive the environmental conditions of Haliburton County.

In the winter, the changing fur colour from brown to white is a well-known adaptation of the snowshoe hare, helping it avoid predator detection. What is less known is that hares are like cows-digestively. They are pseudo-ruminants or coprophagic, meaning they eat their own dung. This seemingly "distasteful" behaviour is normal for rabbits and hares as their diet of bark, twigs, leaves and conifer needles can leave the hare nutrient deficient.

By redigesting their scat, the hare can capture extra nutrients from their droppings that would otherwise be lost. Studies have shown that when hares are prevented from ingesting their own feces, they become weak and unhealthy, confirming that the second time through the digestive system is a vital adaptation. What is left behind after the second time around is a brown, round pellet, about the size of a small marble. Crushing a dry pellet, what you will find is like compressed sawdust; every possible nutritional benefit has been eked out of plant fiber that the hare digests.

The barbed tongue of the Pileated Woodpecker allows it to effectively feed on ants and other insects in the heartwood of trees. /Photo by Ed Poropat

Many animals migrate to avoid the harshness of winter, however, some woodpeckers, including the elusive Pileated Woodpecker, stay in their preferred nesting region all winter. This is, in part, because they have a unique adaptation that allows them to successfully find food year around. In combination with their chisel-like beak, all woodpeckers have long, specialized tongues which allow them to reach grubs (beetle larva), carpenter ants and other delicious morsels hidden beyond the reach of most birds. The Pileated Woodpecker's tongue has a barbed tip, the yellow-bellied sapsucker's is brushed tipped to help lap up sap but, for length, the record goes to the northern flicker with a tongue extending over five centimetres past the tip of their beak.

Packing an impressively long tongue into a relatively small head is an anatomical wonder. The tongue starts under the palate of the upper beak and wraps itself completely around the skull, exiting through the bottom part of the beak. Storing its long tongue around its skull has a dual function. Not only does it allow the woodpecker's tongue to reach well past the length of their beak, but it also acts like a harness for its brain. Similar to a seat belt supporting you when you slam on the brakes, the tongue works in conjunction with plates of spongy bones to softly cradle the brain during their high torqued tree excavations.

Beyond feeding itself, all animals naturally strive to produce offspring. After mating, some species can delay birth, pressing the pause button until the optimum conditions exist for birthing their young. There are over 100 mammal species who utilize delayed implantation or embryonic diapause to increase their reproductive success; most commonly marsupials (kangaroos, opossums, etc.), weasels and bears.

Black Bears in Haliburton County will mate in June or early July, but the embryo does not attach to the uterine wall until November. This will only occur if the sow has stored sufficient fat for the winter slumber and birthing. The embryo will not attach if the mom goes into hibernation underweight. The cubs are born in January while the mother bear is asleep, the envy of all mothers out there! About the size of a chipmunk, hairless and blind, the cubs suckle, snuggle, and sleep most the winter until they emerge from the den, with momma bear, sometime in late April or May when the vegetative bounty is at its peak.

Beyond this birthing marvel, denning bears do not urinate or defecate all winter. Without urination, most animals would suffer from urea poisoning, but black bears have a unique chemistry that allows them to recycle the urine from their bladder into proteins they can use. Water from the urine is also recycled to prevent dehydration and a fecal plug stops the bear from defecating while hibernating with no ill effects.

So, I leave you with the Wood Frog. While most frogs hibernate below the frost line or under water in the winter. The Wood Frog simply digs itself a form, a small depression under the leaf litter or in a rotting log. Amazingly, 65 per cent of the water in the frog can completely freeze; a "frogsicle" of sorts. However, the Wood Frog also produces glucose, nature's antifreeze, which protects the vital organs from tissue damage resulting from sharp ice crystals. Once the spring arrives and the temperatures warm up, the Wood Frog thaws out and gets active again; another example of the mysterious and wonderful world of wildlife adaptation in our sometimes harsh and always dynamic natural environment.

County Life

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

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Welcome to 2023, don'tcha know

Maybelle's

Fireside stories

HELLOOOOOO DEAR reader, I'm writing you from 2023! Yes, it's a new year and ol' Maybelle seems to be on a new page somewhere in the ether. Not much happening yet. For a whole week, every day seemed like Sunday. That weird time between Christmas, Chanukah and a new calendar. Did it feel like that to you, too?

And dare I say it's been a bit discombobulating with that big dump of snow we had for Christmas and then came rain that washed it all away. Well, I'm still holding that week of snow, snow, and more snow in my mind's eye, because to ol' Maybelle, it was so beoootiful!

Why, every time I looked out of my cottage windows, I saw a painting – fluffy white cotton lining every branch of every tree. It took my breath away. And after bingeing on my Auntie Fester's triple garlic dip, that was a good thing, especially for my friends.

Now, before I go on, let me say this: Happy New Year! I know you've heard it a million times already, but I mean it from my heart. This ol' gal wishes you the best. Of what? Of the sweet things money can't buy that bring you joy and happiness. That make you feel peaceful, hopeful, inspired, and above all grateful.

You know what I became aware of during those seven days or so leading up to the new year? How lucky I am to be living in Lake WhaddayathinkImean. How lucky I am to have a roof above my head and food in my fridge, and a pet bear named Bogart who loves me.

How wonderful it feels to go into the village and see people I know, who I have history with, good history, and have little chats and updates with and a warm feeling of goodwill.

I'll take more of that in 2023, thank you very much!

And then there are my good friends: Vilma Yuccch, Twindle Mumbly, Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom, Beanpole Starkman and Sybil Beaucannon Hughes. Boy, do I feel grateful for them, don'tcha know. Why that ol' fire pit out back of my cottage has seen many a night when we sat star-gazing and talking about everything under, around, and beside the sun.

We discussed everything and nothing. Yes, we barked about politics, got all sentimental about shared shenanigans, hopes, wishes and dreams. And sometimes we would sit in silence, resting in the presence of love and harmony.

Oh my, that sounded sucky!

Well, I'm just being honest with you, dear reader. Like I said, it's the sweet things that money can't buy that curls this ol' gal's hair without the need for a curling iron, and which I wish for you.

Maybelle's Fireside Stories is written by Jerelyn Craden. "Maybelle's Cure for What Ails You," 21 of Maybelle's best short stories is now available as an e-book at www.amazon.com.

Farmers' Market seeking vendors

The Haliburton County Farmers' Market Association is excited to announce that applications for the 2023 Farmers' Market Season are now open and can be found online at hcfma.ca by clicking the link, on Facebook, or by emailing incrediblehcfma@gmail.com. Deadline to apply to be a full season vendor is Jan. 31. Guest vendor spots will remain available after this date, as will "community at table" spots.

They are also excited to announce a new partnership with Abbey Gardens where the Friday Market will be hosted this season from May 19 to Oct. 6. We sincerely thank the Algonquin Highlands Council and parks department for hosting us in Stanhope outside the community center for all the years previous.

Submitted

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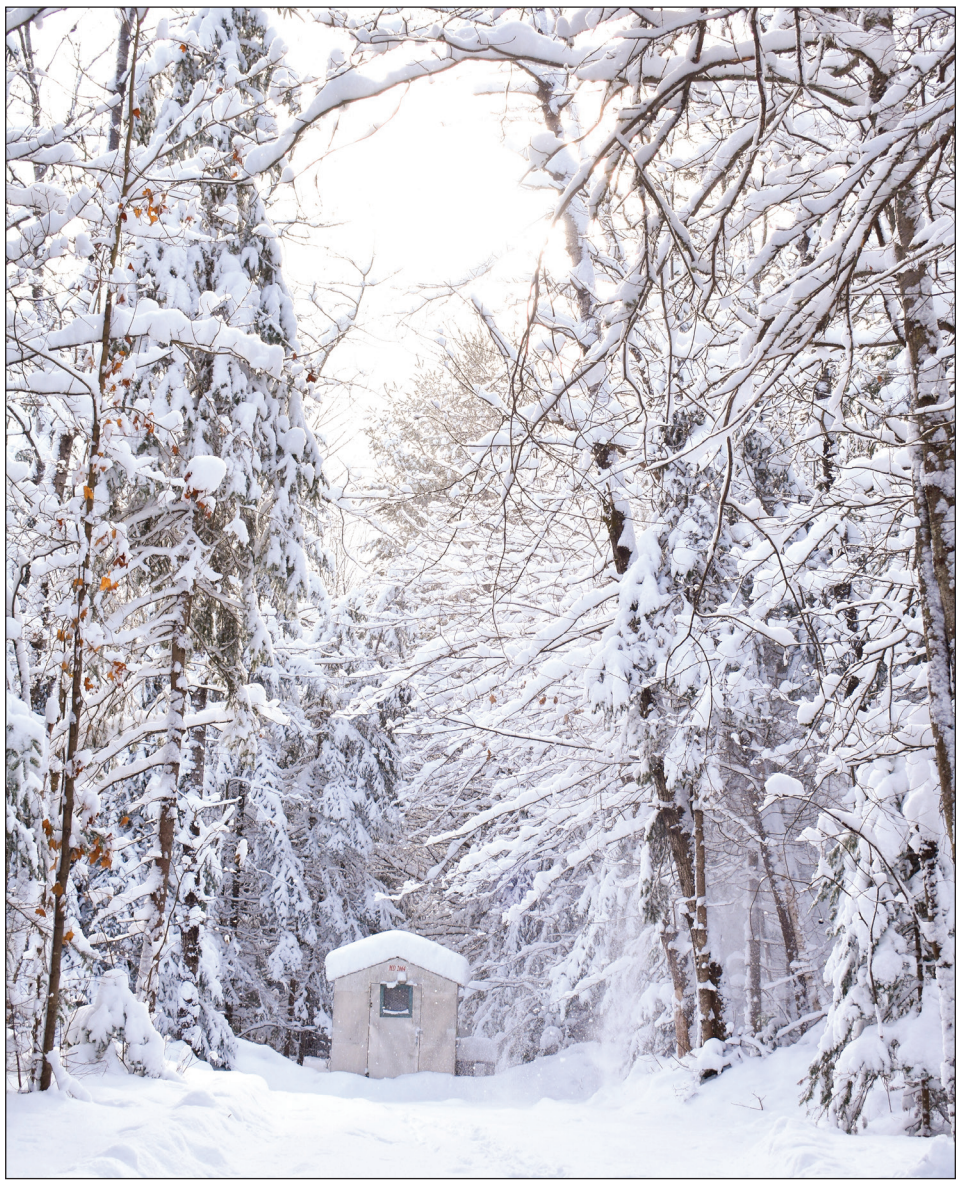

Dreaming of a white January
It was a white Christmas in Gelert after a heavy overnight snowfall. /VIVIAN COLLINGS Staff

Water rushes down the Gull River on a gloomy winter day. /Submitted by Guenter Horst

No ice is safe ice

The Haliburton Highlands Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is warning the public to exercise extreme caution near any bodies of water that presently have ice on them. Remember no ice is safe ice.

Consider the risks to yourself and others should you venture out on frozen surfaces. This not only puts the person in harm's way but when first responders are called to an emergency on ice, the rescue efforts are complicated and puts firefighter, police and paramedic lives also at risk.

Safety tips if you are considering venturing out on frozen surfaces:

- Wear appropriate clothing to prevent hypothermia.
- Ensure your cellphone is fully charged. Consider downloading https://what3words.com/how-to-use-the-what3words-app/
- This app will aid first responders in pinpointing your location when you need help.
- Never go out alone and always tell someone your planned destination and your expected time of return.
- Avoid unfamiliar areas at night.
- If you choose to go out on the ice, carry safety equipment such as ice picks and throw ropes for self-rescue or to aid others. The response time from emergency personnel may be prolonged due to the vastness of Haliburton County.
- Do not drink alcohol or consume other drugs. Alcohol/drugs impair judgement and reduces your body's ability to stay warm in cold conditions.

Submitted by the Haliburton Highlands OPP

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Send your letters to the editor to vivian@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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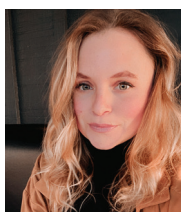
A quest for quirky connections

What are the little things that bring you joy?

Everyone has their thing. You know, those teeny, tiny things that feel insignificant but bring you joy. Maybe it's something that you keep a secret; a subtle pleasure that gets you through the day. Perhaps it's a more loud and proud thing; something you can yell from the rooftops, and are eager to share with every passerby.

These little things are what separate us from others around us, yet they are rarely openly discussed. I've always found the concept of meeting new people to be a fascinating experiment to witness. When two people meet for the first time, there is a delicate waltz many are practiced in performing.



EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Staff

"What do you do? Where do you work? Where are you from? Who do you know?"

It's the basic questions that skim the surface of the soul. The black and white connections that we believe provide us with enough context to formalize a relationship.

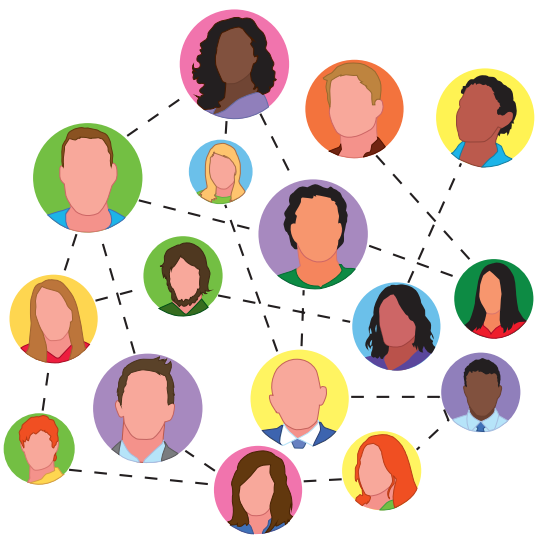
Sometimes, two things click. A similar career. An overlapping experience in residential choices. A mutual friend. Sometimes once those connections are made, there is opportunity to dive deeper. Sometimes.

Other times, the parties go their separate ways, citing "nothing in common" as the reasoning.

Then, we move on, waiting to find the next person we may have something in common with. The quest for connection continues.

It's human nature to crave connection. Whether it be social, romantic, or professional. Finding someone you click with isn't just an opportunity to elongate a conversation, it is also the chance to feel seen, heard, and understood. A connection means you see something in yourself in the person in front of you.

Yet as humans, we shy away from these deeper connections. There are dozens of reasons why connections are roadblocked early on. We start with the surface questions, and are quick to judge and move on if there's no immediate spark. Sometimes, if beliefs vary and come to the surface early-on, we can shut down. Other times, religious or political backgrounds can clash. Age differences can pose a distraction. Different upbringings can provide a wedge.



Not everyone has to be best friends. But at the end of the day, beneath the surface of looks, background, and occupation, we are all just humans, seeking someone to click with.

Imagine if we put the basics behind us and went on a quest for quirky. What if we didn't focus on the facts, and instead, connected over the complexities.

You know your own joy, but what about the joy of others?

What if you meet someone else who makes daisy chains every summer. Someone who fidgets with origami paper cranes when they get nervous. Someone who snacks on Triscuit crackers with jam in their kitchen. Someone who collects vintage boots. Someone who loves dogs more than humans. Someone who knits scarves and socks. Someone who loves old movies. Someone who shares that little thing that brings you joy, that makes you different - or so you thought.

This new year, I encourage you to find the quirky in people. Don't just ask about the basics, dive deeper. Ask about what brings them joy. What makes them tick. What keeps them afloat. What inspires them. You might just be surprised by who you really click with.

Top 10 reasons why the neck beard trend won't last

I RECENTLY READ a story about how neck beards are becoming more popular among some young people. A neck beard is exactly what it sounds like. It is when a man let's the hair on his neck grow, while keeping the face above is clean shaven. While it might seem trendy, I happen to think this cannot last. Here are my top 10 reasons why.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. The powerful turtleneck sweater lobby opposes it.
2. The neck is not a convenient place to store food crumbs.
3. A neck beard makes nodding much more difficult.
4. People will think your mom is lousy at making scarfs.
5. Trendsetters are already hinting at the shoulder beard.
6. People will soon tire of that he's-being-choked-by-a-squirrel look.
7. The Adam's apple is just too attractive to cover up.
8. Hides bow ties.
9. Makes it harder to convey a gulp to show you are frightened.
10. Emergency tracheotomies would also require barbers.

Hush

Boulders of Snow, barricading the side of the road,
in the aftermath of the storm,
the fury of Wind, whirling flurries through Air, silenced by a stone Sky,
a stillness blanketing the buried earth, veiling the bones of trees, quivering beneath their skin of Snow,
the pines, bent, where Wind dented their branches, leaving its imprint behind.
I inhale the hush, muffling this corner of the world,
the pureness of northern Air, rushing through my veins,
as I clamber over the heaps of Snow, to reach the River down below,
sliding down the steepness of the incline, nothing to grip, as the worn treads of my boots, slip in the Snow,
and I stumble my way down the hill, tiny blades of Air, pricking my cheeks,
a stray seagull flapping past, silent in its flight, only the whoosh of its wings, grazing Air,
and I wonder why it stays, where it waited out the storm, whether it's lost its flock or gone rogue,
dueling Wind and cold.
I watch 'till it shrinks to the size of a snowflake, melting into Sky,
wondering whether it wanted to land on the runway of River, that's sheathed in ice,
this feathered fleck of Life, ruffling the quiet of morning, as I reach the River, and for a moment, just breathe,
inhaling Sky and Snow and the cluster of trees, huddled on the opposite bank,
my Breath, frozen as the River, as I exhale, puffs of white cloud, merging with Air,
how many Breaths have I taken this year, how many steps,
as I walk along the riverbank, beneath this stone Sky,
the pebble of Sun trying to seep through, like the patches of black River that aren't sealed in ice,
its surface, like glass, and I wonder how deep its current flows, beneath its ceiling of ice, its roof of Snow,
this River that never sleeps, maybe only rests, as its flow stills to a whisper,
and I listen to the hush of what I can't see,
fish, swishing through the darkness, the roots of trees, slithering beneath the frozen earth,
squirrels, curled in heaps of fur, squirming in their nests, deer hooves, dimpling Snow in the forest,
a lone seagull, flapping through Air, somewhere, searching for a place to land,
billions of Breaths, pausing to rest, beneath this borderless Sky,
before another storm arrives, to sweep the silence away.

Sylvie Kalenda

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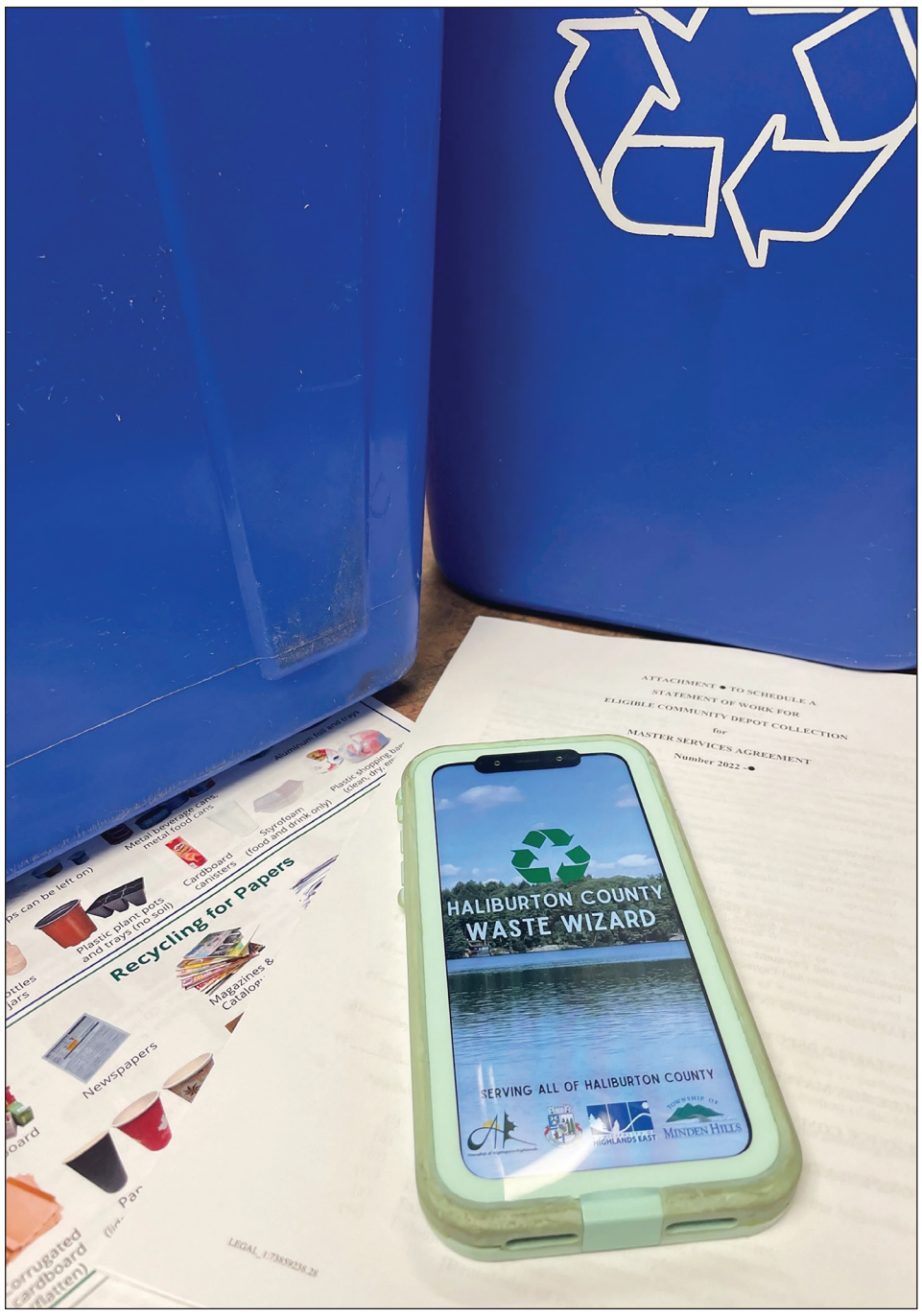
The evolution of the Blue Box

JOHN WATSON
Special to *County Life*



The next few years are going to be a momentous time for the evolution of the Blue Box program across the province. /JOHN WATSON Special to *County Life*

It was back in 1983 that the first official municipal Blue Box program started in Kitchener, Ontario. While other communities may claim to have provided recycling first, these other historic programs were often coordinated by volunteers, or without the use of the now world-famous "blue box." Funnily, the original size of the blue box was selected to ensure university students wouldn't steal them for storing record albums!

Subsequently, municipalities across the province implemented Blue Box recycling programs for their residents. At that time, municipalities funded their Blue Box programs entirely through the municipal tax base and in some cases, the sale of recyclable materials.

In 1994, the passing of Ontario Regulation 101/94 "Recycling and Composting of Municipal Waste" required most municipalities to establish and operate a Blue Box program. In 2002, the Waste Diversion Act passed, which led to the 2004 implementation of the Blue Box Program Plan (BBPP). The BBPP mandated municipalities fund 50 per cent of Blue Box program costs, and producers of printed paper and packaging fund the other 50 per cent of Blue Box program costs. Under the BBPP, municipalities are responsible for arranging their own Blue Box collection and processing contracts. Each spring, municipalities report their BBPP costs to Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA), a regulator mandated by the Government of Ontario to enforce the province's recycling laws. How onerous is this reporting? Along with reporting Blue Box tonnages, and hauling and processing costs, at one point, you are calculating what percentage of a landfill office's propane is used for the residential Blue Box program. Based on this annual "datacall," an organization representing the producers, Stewardship Ontario, then pays the municipalities.

Under the BBPP, municipalities have long argued they are covering more than 50 per cent of the Blue Box program costs. And producers have consistently been unhappy with the overall Blue Box costs, feeling municipalities are ineffective at operating the system.

After many attempts to "fix" the BBPP, in 2021 Ontario regulation 391/21 "Blue Box" passed. This Regulation aims to expand the Blue Box to more communities, standardize acceptable Blue Box materials across the province, and importantly, make producers of paper products, packaging, and packaging-like products 100 per cent financially and operationally responsible for the residential Blue Box program.

This new regulation is being implemented in two phases: 1) transition, and 2) post-transition. The first eligible communities (including Toronto and Ottawa) start the transition on July 1, 2023. In Haliburton County, Dysart and Highlands East transition on Jan. 1, 2024, Algonquin Highlands transitions Mar. 31, 2024, and Minden Hills transitions Oct. 1, 2024. By Dec. 31, 2025, all eligible communities in Ontario will be transitioned. The post-transition phase starts Jan. 1, 2026, which is when the entirety of the Blue Box regulation comes into effect.

Circular Materials, a non-profit producer responsibility organization, represents the vast majority of producers of paper products, packaging, and packaging-like products. Some of Circular Materials members include Coca-Cola, Kraft Heinz Company, Loblaw Companies, Maple Leaf Foods, McDonald's, Metro, Pepsico, P&G, Restaurant Brands International, and The Clorox Company. Because of Circular Materials' market reach, it gets to create the "rules" of the new Blue Box common collection system in compliance of the regulation.

Circular Materials has proposed various operational agreements for the transition period. The waste management staff at Dysart, Algonquin Highlands, Highlands East, and Minden Hills, are regularly meeting with stakeholders including Association of Municipalities Ontario, Continuous Improvement Fund, and Municipal Waste Association, as they review the agreements and financial offers being made by Circular Materials.

In 2023, waste management staff will present reports on the Blue Box regulation and transition to their respective municipal councils. Ultimately, the four lower-tier municipal councils will need to determine if they want to enter into a contractual and financial agreement with Circular Materials.

And if you're wondering—considering they don't provide actual blue boxes, or provide curbside collection—do the municipalities in Haliburton County actually have Blue Box programs? The answer is yes! When you drop-off acceptable recycling at your local waste management site, you are participating in a depot-based Blue Box program.

Suffice it to say, the next few years are going to be a momentous time for the evolution of the Blue Box program across the province.

John Watson is the Environmental Manager for the Municipality of Dysart et al.

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Trapper's Workshop
When: Sunday Jan. 15
Where: Lloyd Watson Community Centre in Wilberforce.
9 a.m. 3 p.m.
Admission is $2, everyone is welcome! Non-perishable food donations will be gratefully accepted for the Central Food Network. For more information contact Minden District Fur Harvesters, Ted Nottage, 705-448-2877

Haliburton Highlands Writer's and editor's Network
When: HHWEN regular meeting the third Thursday of every month. Starting Dec. 15 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Minden Library, Rotary Room, 176 Bobcaygeon Rd., Minden.
Gather and meet members, read stories, general news.Contact Kay Millard,Secretary HHWEN, 705-286-6635

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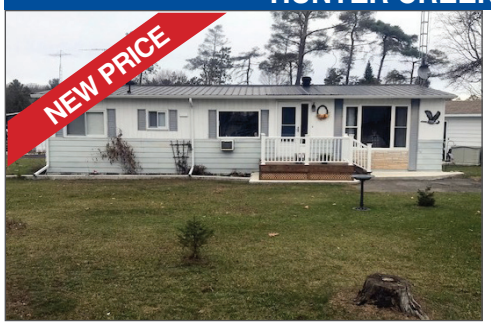

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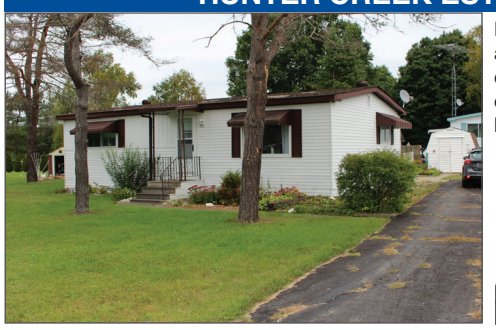

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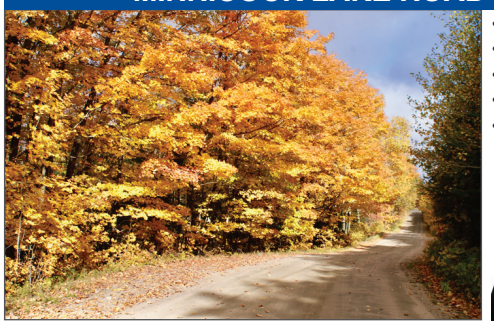

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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email vivian@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

A chickadee chirps after landing in the snow. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

A raven's black feathers shine in the winter light. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

A snowy doe is all eyes and ears. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

A buck with two-point spikes sports a snowy coat. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

Three deer look curiously ahead on Fred Jones Road in Haliburton. /Submitted by Jason Brain

SIRCH carpentry program grads 'build something beautiful'

VIVIAN COLLINGS
County Life Staff

Trainees of the SIRCH Community Services Basics of Carpentry program graduated from the program on Wednesday, Dec. 7 and proudly stand outside the bunkie they built which will be up for auction in the spring. /VIVIAN COLLINGS Staff

When opportunity knocks, SIRCH Basics of Carpentry graduates can now feel confident opening (and building or installing!) the door.

Four trainees graduated from SIRCH Community Service's First Steps Training: Basics of Carpentry program on Wednesday, Dec. 7, a celebration for the hours of work they put in the classroom as well as building a bunkie together.

The program is a starting point for opportunities for more training or employment in the carpentry or construction trades.

"The program opened up a lot of things for me, not just doing carpentry, but the in-class portion opened up a lot of different views on it," said graduate Lily Aubrey. "I just learned a lot of things that I wasn't expecting to learn."

Aubrey said she now feels confident to complete woodworking on her own as a side business as well as looking to start a job in carpentry in the near future.

Instructor of the program Doug Norris and SIRCH training coordinator Dianne Woodcock said they are proud of each of the graduates.

"This group has been small, but mighty. You have done an amazing job, and it's been an absolute joy to spend time with you and to watch you all grow," Woodcock said.

Norris hoped that the biggest takeaway from the program for the graduates was a passion for creating beauty through their work.

"That's what it's all about. The skills of construction and carpentry are not very complex, but getting them all come together is what's important," Norris said. "They only all come together to make something really beautiful when you do them over and over with other people working with you, and understanding that at the end of it, something new is in the world because of it."

Graduates from last year's carpentry program presented SIRCH executive director Gena Robertson with a framed certificate of thanks, signed by each of them.

Robertson congratulated the new group and thanked everyone for their gift to her.

"You will all make a difference in the world," she said.

Woodcock thanked the Haliburton Home Builders Association and Fleming CREW for their support, the Highlands Summer Festival for allowing the program to use their space to work in as well as Emmerson Lumber for their contributions.

The bunkie built by the recent graduates will be up for auction in the spring.

Contact SIRCH, 705-457-1742 or info@sirch.on.ca for more information about their training programs.

"All of the skills that you learned, and the ones you are going to learn, I hope the thing that remains for you is that you're building something beautiful, whether it's in your own backyard or for a client, you can be proud of it. And, I've been proud to work with you," Norris said.

Legion Events

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge every Monday at 1 p.m. Schofield Room.
Tuesdays: League darts starting at 7 p.m.
Wednesdays:
Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall.
Bingo doors open at 6 p.m.
Bingo starts at 7 p.m. $500 Jackpot - $1000 Jackpot - last Wednesday of the month
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, starting at 7 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Meat draw has five draws, five prizes each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $2 per draw. Ed Pickard, MC.
Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards.
Saturdays: 50/50 Draw 4 p.m. draw – tickets are $1 each available in the Clubroom.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, for more information call the Legion today at 705-457-2571, email rcll129@outlook.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Come on out and support Haliburton Legion Branch 129 ... everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m. and Sat. 3 to 6 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Monday to Thursday Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' Tuesday.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with Meat draws at 11:30 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly Activities:
Karaoke every second Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week
Tuesday: Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Schedules are subject to change without notice, so contact each Legion for updates.

Wilberforce

Jan 12: 2 to 6 p.m.
HHHS social rec. exercise, board games 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Jan 13: 2 to 9 p.m. Pool 2 p.m. Wing night & Jam session 5 to 8 p.m.
Jan 14: 2 to 6 p.m. Meat draw 3 p.m.
Jan 15 to 17: Closed
Jan 18: 2 to 6 p.m. Darts 2 p.m.
Everyone welcome!
If you are planning a function for social or other event providing our guidelines/ conditions are met, please feel free to contact us at 705-448-2221.
Friday dinners are in jeopardy due to lack of volunteers. Janice S. needs to step back so if interested please reach out ASAP to help. Young people come out and show the elders how it's done!

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A SALUTE TO ROBBIE BURNS: Andrew and Breanne Mansfield were just two of many performers who paid tribute to the great Scottish poet Robbie Burns Friday evening. They were participating in the Burns Night sponsored by the Haliburton Highlanders Pipes and Drums at the Haliburton Legion. In addition to Highland and country dancing, the audience was treated to the music of the pipes and drums, piping in of the haggis and a buffet. The address to the Haggis was delivered by Bill Elliott.

Performing arts theatre construction begins

The theatre the performing arts community and its supporters have been waiting for is finally under construction.

Work started earlier this month on the conversion of a former gymnasium at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School to a 230 seat performing arts theatre. The committee overseeing the project has also announced the name of the new facility. It will be known as the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion.

"Finally, after 20 years we are going to get a theatre the community can be proud of," committee member Caryl Moulton said as she stood among the dust and debris in the old gymnasium. "From a Highlands Little Theatre point of view, and for all performing groups, this is an important day."

A performing arts theatre for the Highlands has been a dream for many groups, not only Highlands Little Theatre. Almost two years ago that vision moved from a dream onto the long road to reality. When the school board received approval for a number of major additions, including a new triple gymnasium, hopes were revived to convert the old gymnasium into a proper theatre.

For years the stage in the building was home to theatrical productions, musical presentations and other entertainment events. While the performers struggled with limited backstage facilities, gerrymandered lighting and an inadequate performance space the audience attempted to remain comfortably seated on stacking chairs, struggling with poor sight lines and difficult acoustics. All the groups which used the facility dreamed of a venue which would include the proper theatre infrastructure and provide an enjoyable and comfortable experience for the audience.

While the renovation at the high school provided an opportunity for the inclusion of a theatre, the project had to be dropped when provincial budget restraints limited the scope of the work. The performing arts community in the Highlands was not deterred

(more on page 3)

DREAMS DO COME TRUE: Tom Robinson, Caryl Moulton and Curtis Eastmure examine the plans in the space that will soon become the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion at HHSS.

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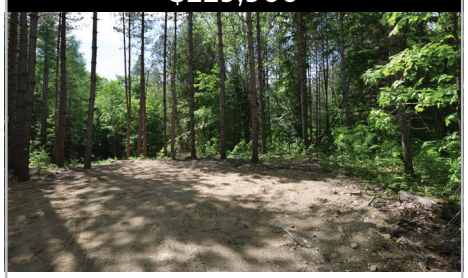

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